

**TESTIMONY OF THE HONORABLE DICK THORNBURGH, MEMBER,  
GETTYSBURG NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD MUSEUM FOUNDATION  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS,  
TO THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE, DRUG POLICY AND  
HUMAN RESOURCES, HOUSE GOVERNMENT REFORM COMMITTEE  
  
CONCERNING FUNDING NEEDS OF THE NATIONAL PARKS AND THE  
PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN GETTYSBURG NATIONAL MILITARY PARK  
AND THE GETTYSBURG NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD MUSEUM  
FOUNDATION**

**March 14, 2005**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee:

My name is Dick Thornburgh. It is an honor to appear before you today as the former Governor of Pennsylvania and as a member of the Board of Directors of the Gettysburg National Battlefield Museum Foundation. I am beginning my fifth year of service on the Foundation's Board and am pleased to have this opportunity to share with you information about the partnership we enjoy with Gettysburg National Military Park.

(A current biography is attached at (1).)

With me here today is the Foundation's president, Robert C. Wilburn.

The mission of our partnership is to tell the story of the Gettysburg Campaign, to restore and properly preserve the sacred ground - and the significance - of America's most revered Civil War battlefield, to preserve and exhibit Gettysburg's priceless collection of artifacts and archives, including the historic Gettysburg Cyclorama painting, and to give visitors a deeper, more lasting appreciation of what happened here. To accomplish this mission, the Gettysburg National Battlefield Museum Foundation will raise the necessary funds to restore significant portions of the battlefield to their 1863 appearance and to design, build and operate new Museum and Visitor Center facilities to enhance the Gettysburg experience for the nearly two million visitors who come to Gettysburg National Military Park each year.

(Attachment (2) lists members of the Foundation Board of Directors, the distinguished historians who are members of our Gettysburg Museum Advisory Committee and the members of our National Council who have agreed to work closely with us to support our fundraising and outreach efforts.)

On a personal level, I appreciate your interest in the Foundation's efforts to enhance the Gettysburg experience, and how those efforts serve to address the financial needs of Gettysburg National Military Park. I am delighted to have the opportunity through this Subcommittee to inform the Congress and the American people about our progress, our hopes and our goals. The Foundation appreciates the responsibility it has been granted to share in the preservation and enhancement of our national treasure at Gettysburg. We also are very proud of the progress we have made and our ongoing partnership with the National Park Service.

Before responding to your questions, I would like to spend a few moments discussing our vision for the Museum and Visitor Center and the Gettysburg experience. I also would like to talk about Gettysburg's importance to America, especially at a time when our commitment to freedom and democracy is once again being put to the test.

### **The Vision and the Challenge**

In the Gettysburg Address, Abraham Lincoln talked of a "new birth of freedom." Today, the Foundation believes that the public-private partnership with the National Park Service at Gettysburg offers a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for a "new birth" for Gettysburg.

The heart of our effort is the new Gettysburg Museum and Visitor Center, which will enhance the resources of Gettysburg National Military Park and enable us to protect the sacred ground of our most revered Civil War battlefield. By properly restoring and preserving the battlefield and the park's collection of objects, artifacts and archival materials, we can give visitors a deeper, more lasting appreciation of the events and the meaning of Gettysburg and help them connect that battle with America's continuing commitment to freedom around the world.

Through this partnership, the Foundation can help to ensure that Gettysburg's programs and exhibits invite exploration of our history. That they help us better understand the forces that shaped our national character, and move us to recommit ourselves to the principle that people can govern themselves.

(Attachment (3) is an op-ed I wrote for the Harrisburg Patriot-News several years ago that describes in greater detail my thoughts on the symbols of American freedom that dot the Pennsylvania landscape, as well as the opportunity - and obligation - we all share to commit ourselves to their success.)

Let me tell you some of the goals we want to accomplish through our partnership with the National Park Service:

- ◆ We want to educate and to inspire; to promote learning by creating the kind of excitement that makes people thirst to know more.
- ◆ We want people to leave Gettysburg with a deeper, more lasting appreciation of what happened here.

- ◆ We want people to have a rewarding experience, and also to stir their emotions and enable them to imagine what it was like for the soldiers who battled on Gettysburg's fields and hills in those first days of July in 1863.
- ◆ We want to create a connection with the events of 1863 and to extend that connection to the community – its architecture, its history and its people. For the fullest understanding, visitors should know the town of Gettysburg as well as the battlefield.

To achieve those goals, we are seeking to raise a total of \$95 million to restore and preserve this national treasure for future generations. Together with the dedicated staff at Gettysburg National Military Park, we will:

- ◆ Provide the American people with a state-of-the art Museum and Visitor Center
- ◆ Ensure high quality interpretation and educational opportunities
- ◆ Restore and fully protect the historic Gettysburg Cyclorama painting
- ◆ Protect and provide for proper display of the artifact collection
- ◆ Return significant portions of the battlefield, now paved over and covered with buildings, as close as possible to their state during the battle in 1863
- ◆ Acquire additional battlefield land to expand the park's buffer area and provide a "decompression zone" to give visitors a better sense of what Gettysburg was like 142 years ago
- ◆ Create a permanent endowment to support ongoing annual building maintenance and preservation of the park's collection.

Today at Gettysburg, we have the opportunity to accomplish something that the National Park Service would likely never be able to accomplish on its own. Together, as partners, we can provide the time, money, and talent necessary to ensure the Gettysburg experience reaches its full potential. The Foundation considers it a privilege to have a role in helping to provide for the future of this historic site.

## **A Progress Report**

That is our vision. Let me begin my progress report with a quick summary of the history of the Gettysburg National Battlefield Museum Foundation and our partnership with the National Park Service at Gettysburg..

The Gettysburg National Battlefield Museum Foundation was established in 1998 to address the needs of the Gettysburg National Military Park, as outlined in the park's General Management Plan. From the beginning, the Foundation believed that a partnership with the National Park Service would be the best way to address the challenges facing this historic treasure. Toward that end, we created an advisory board of noted Civil War scholars to assist us in developing the interpretive plan.

In addition to a new Museum and Visitor Center, the partnership is designed to enhance roads and infrastructure, acquire land, restore the Gettysburg Cyclorama painting, rehabilitate historic landscapes, preserve and enhance display of the park's collection of Civil War artifacts and equip and furnish the new facilities. The Museum Foundation also agreed to operate the new Museum and Visitor Center and, after 20 years, to donate the land, building and facilities to the National Park Service.

In this regard, I should note, in light of the Subcommittee's interest in the financial needs of Gettysburg National Military Park, that this partnership's objectives will do more than provide necessary funding to address significant infrastructure needs at the park. Since the Museum Foundation will operate - at its own expense - the new Museum and Visitor Center for the National Park Service for a period of 20 years, the Foundation also will alleviate any additional operating costs the park would otherwise have incurred.

Following several years of public hearings and comment, the Foundation appointed Bob Wilburn its president in October 2000. Since then, the Foundation has recruited a dedicated board of directors who serve as public ambassadors for the project, developed and implemented a successful fundraising strategy that has enabled us to begin to restore the historic Gettysburg Cyclorama painting and will enable us to break ground for the new facilities in June, and convened design teams to develop the concepts for the new building and museum exhibit galleries.

In July 2001, following a nationwide search, the Museum Foundation, again in partnership with Gettysburg National Military Park, engaged the architectural firm of Cooper, Robertson & Partners, whose work includes Monticello, the city of Charleston, SC, the Museum of Modern Art in New York City and Lincoln Center. We also selected the exhibit design firm of Gallagher & Associates, which has provided similar services for the Smithsonian, the visitor center at Yellowstone National Park, the Museum of Jewish Heritage and the Maryland Museum of African American History and Culture in Baltimore.

In January 2002 we released the conceptual design for the new Gettysburg Museum and Visitor Center. The building blends into the rural Pennsylvania landscape while at the same time taking advantage of state-of-the art exhibitry to tell the Gettysburg story.

(Renderings of the conceptual design for the building, as well as a ground-floor rendering of the building interior, are at Attachment (4).)

The new building will showcase the battlefield, invite visitors to walk the land and more easily appreciate the significance of what happened here. Exhibits will immerse visitors in stories of the Civil War era, as well as the battle. These stories will be told - in the words of the participants - from four important perspectives:

- ◆ Commanders, including Abraham Lincoln, George Meade, Jefferson Davis and Robert E. Lee
- ◆ Common soldiers, each of whom had his own reasons for fighting

- ◆ Civilians, especially the citizens of Gettysburg, whose small crossroads town was overrun by 165,000 soldiers -- the conflict literally entering their homes
- ◆ Correspondents, through whose eyes most of America viewed the war.

The new Museum and Visitor Center will give Gettysburg sufficient space to educate. New programs will be put into place, giving visitors a deeper view of what Gettysburg means to our country. The new museum also will include a Cyclorama Gallery, Electric Map/theaters, classrooms, research center, a book and museum store and food service.

Expanded exhibit space and open storage facilities will enable visitors to see more of the park's collection of Civil War artifacts and archives than ever before. With more than 38,000 historic artifacts and 700,000 text documents, maps and photographs, the collection is one of the most extensive in the world. Each object and every document tells a story — of duty, sacrifice and reconciliation.

Teams from the Foundation, the National Park Service, the advisory committee of historians, licensed battlefield guides and exhibit design consultants have developed plans for the museum's main exhibit galleries, which will be organized to help visitors understand and appreciate three major themes:

- The unfinished work of the Declaration of Independence, the causes of the Civil War, and the war until June 1863
- The Campaign and Battle of Gettysburg, which will comprise about two-thirds of the exhibit galleries
- The Gettysburg Address, the Civil War from Gettysburg to Appomattox, reconciliation and the consequences of the war.

These new facilities also will enable Gettysburg to expand its programs to respond to Congressional mandates that the battle be interpreted "in the larger context of the Civil War and American history, including the causes and consequences of the Civil War and including the effects of the war on all the American people" and that Civil War battlefields "recognize and include" in their programs "the unique role that the institution of slavery played in causing the Civil War."

Expansion will not mean an end to the stories the park has always told. The central story of Gettysburg will always be that of the battle - the tactical movements, decisions of the generals and the heroism and valor of the soldiers, both Union and Confederate.

### **Gettysburg Community Embraces the Project**

However worthy our vision for Gettysburg National Military Park, we cannot truly fulfill our objectives without the involvement and support of the citizens of Gettysburg. With that in mind, the Foundation continues to keep interested local citizens, community and business leaders, and public officials in the greater Gettysburg community informed about our progress and to solicit their input. Our board and advisory committees include representatives from the community; we also are an active partner in the Main Street

Gettysburg coalition. We view the project for which we have responsibility as an important component of a variety of programs and activities underway to enhance the Gettysburg experience for our visitors.

One cannot fully experience the battlefields without also experiencing the town, which itself was a site of military action where soldiers camped, fought and died. We want to extend visitors' stays in Gettysburg, to encourage them to experience the community and to return for repeat visits. We support the National Park Service's plans to develop an improved transportation system that will reduce traffic backups and move visitors more easily and efficiently from the new Museum and Visitor Center to the town and back.

### **Fundraising Update**

To accomplish our goals, the Foundation is conducting a nationwide fundraising campaign, with \$95 million as our goal. Of the total, \$68.3 million represents the cost to design and construct the new Museum and Visitor Center, including museum exhibits and restoration of the historic Gettysburg Cyclorama painting. Last year we announced that we wanted to have \$75 million in funding commitments prior to groundbreaking. This total would ensure that we have sufficient funds to complete the new facilities, while at the same time taking into account gifts and expenses that support the overall project, but not the Museum and Visitor Center component.

As of today, I am pleased to report that the Foundation has identified \$69.4 million toward our \$75 million goal and plans to break ground on the new facility on June 2. Of that total:

- ◆ Seventeen percent - \$11.9 million - has been appropriated by Congress. These funds include \$9 million earmarked for the restoration of the Gettysburg Cyclorama painting and an additional \$2.9 million earmarked for preservation of the park's collection of artifacts and archives.
- ◆ Twenty-nine percent - \$20.5 million - comes from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, which is investing in the project through its Capital Assistance Program. The Commonwealth recognizes the significant economic impact that Gettysburg's tourism industry has on the state and the Foundation is pleased they have joined us as partners in this project.
- ◆ The remaining 54 percent - \$37 million - comes from the private sector, with \$12 million of that to be borrowed from commercial lenders and the remainder already in hand or pledged from more than 234 private foundations, corporations and individuals.

Just a few weeks ago, the Foundation announced receipt of more than \$5.5 million in gifts and grants, including: \$1 million from The Pew Charitable Trusts in Philadelphia, also with offices in Washington, D.C.; \$1 million from the McCormick Tribune Foundation in Chicago; \$1.5 million from an anonymous donor in New York; and more

than \$1 million from other individuals, corporations and foundations, including \$500,000 from an anonymous donor in western Pennsylvania. Also, two organizations that had previously contributed \$500,000 - a foundation in the Baltimore area and Gettysburg Tours - each increased their commitments to \$1 million.

### **A Classroom of Democracy**

Through our partnership with the National Park Service, we have the opportunity to help Gettysburg National Military Park address many of its infrastructure needs, and to put in place sources of funding that will alleviate some future expenses. But on a larger scale, we have the opportunity to do much more.

We consider this the opportunity of a lifetime to build something of lasting significance. Preserving and enhancing the Gettysburg National Military Park is a responsibility that we all assume for future generations. If we make the most of this opportunity, the restoration of the battlefield and the new Gettysburg Museum and Visitor Center will enable us as partners to better fulfill our educational mission and ignite in our visitors a passion to learn. By bringing to life the experiences of 1863, we can help Americans better see the links between the struggles of the Civil War and the challenges we face today.

Nearly 142 years ago, President Lincoln came to Gettysburg to honor the dead. On that occasion, he urged Americans to be “dedicated here to the unfinished work” of freedom and democracy. Today, another generation has picked up that torch. Preserving the battlefield of Gettysburg and making it a classroom of democracy is one way to advance “the unfinished work” that Abraham Lincoln laid before us.

Thank you.